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# Hearings on MIRV Slated

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The Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Friday will try to add a new dimension to the ABM debate by holding its own hearings on the impact of multiple warheads on the world's arms race.

Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), in going ahead with the hearings during the Senate's debate on the ABM, will push MIRV into the center of the controversy.

MIRV is the technique of putting several warheads on one rocket to use up the missiles defending the target nation. MIRV opponents argue that multiple warheads on one side will prompt more ABMs on the other side, pushing both nuclear superpowers up the arms ladder with no gain in security.

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## MIRV, From A1

Senators at Friday's hearings will link the two systems together—something leading opponents of President Nixon's Safeguard ABM have been unwilling to do in the current debate for fear of confusing the issue.

Several Congressmen showed no such hesitancy in striking out at MIRV yesterday as a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee opened its hearings on the implications of the new nuclear weapon technology.

Rep. Jonathan B. Bingham (D-N.Y.) said the Pentagon opposes a MIRV moratorium be-

cause "the Joint Chiefs of Staff are basically hostile to arms limitations."

Rep. Jeffrey Cohelan (D-Calif.) warned that deployment of MIRV might draw a first strike.

"There is an advantage to an attacker in destroying MIRV missiles in their silos, as for every MIRV missile launcher destroyed, several times that many deliverable warheads will be destroyed. Thus there is an advantage in attacking first before the other side has launched its MIRV missiles," Cohelan said.

The chief danger in MIRV, according to Cohelan, is its effect on the strategic balance.

"If one side perceives the MIRV warheads of the other . . . to be able to destroy a significant portion of its land-based ICBMs in a first strike.

"If such a threat is perceived, the threatened side will have to deploy new offensive or defensive weapons to preserve its deterrent."

Testimony by Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird in recent weeks indicates that U.S. MIRVs could pose such a threat to Russia, Cohelan said.

He quoted Laird's testimony that Poseidon MIRV "is an important program since it promises to improve the accuracy of the Poseidon mis-

sile, thus enhancing its effectiveness against hard targets."

If Laird believes "that our MIRV has a significant capability against hardened targets," Cohelan argued, "it seems inevitable that the Soviets must believe that our MIRV threatens their deterrent forces."

One Republican—Rep. James G. Fulton (R-Pa.)—offered an argument for unilateral U.S. suspension of MIRV testing, obviously tailored to win GOP support, as analogous to the Nixon Administration's plan for withdrawing U.S. troops from Vietnam.

So far, 104 Congressmen have sponsored resolutions calling for a moratorium on MIRV testing. But President Nixon has rejected all pleas to stop firing Poseidon and Minuteman 3 with dummy MIRV warheads.

Russia, in testing the SS-9 rocket with three dummy warheads recently, has shot them all in a bunch. They have land-

ed about 10 miles apart. The true MIRV (multiple-independently-targetable-re-entry vehicle) is the technique of sending the individual warheads to different targets hundreds of miles apart—something the U.S. has flight tested several times.

The Soviet Union, in the view of military leaders, is faced with a MIRV gap. It is thus unlikely Russia would agree to freeze the technology until she catches up to the United States.

Witnesses the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has asked to discuss these and other aspects of MIRV are Gordon MacDonald, of the University of California and formerly vice president for research at the Institute for Defense Analyses; J. P. Ruina, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and formerly director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency; and Herbert York, of the University of California and formerly director of Pentagon research.